

VZCZCXYZ0001
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRH #0088/01 0190813
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 190813Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2325
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUETIJS/CSG JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T RIYADH 000088

NOFORN
SIPDIS

NSC FOR AJOST

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2020
TAGS: [IR](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [SA](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIA: GENERAL JONES' JANUARY 12, 2010
MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE SULTAN BIN ABDULAZIZ, MINISTER OF
DEFENSE AND AVIATION

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Smith for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

SUMMARY

11. (S/NF) General Jones' meeting with Crown Prince Sultan was the first working meeting that the Crown Prince has had with an American official since his return on December 11, 2009 after a year's absence for treatment of colon cancer. During the 30 minute meeting, the Crown Prince on several occasions praised the strong relations between Saudi Arabia and the U.S. and expressed his admiration for President Obama. Prince Sultan seemed in reasonably good physical condition, but notably less mentally sharp than he was a year ago. This was particularly evident in his vague responses to General Jones' points about Iran, Pakistan/Afghanistan and the peace process, which were a series of barely responsive platitudes. End Summary.

Praise for Educational and Economic Cooperation

12. (C) Prince Sultan opened the meeting by noting to Gen. Jones that Saudi Arabia hoped to see continued expansion of U.S.-Saudi cooperation in the educational and economic fields. He reported that he had seen 700 Saudi students while he was in the U.S. and that even though not all of them were on government-sponsored scholarships, they all were very grateful for the opportunity to be studying in the U.S. Gen. Jones' agreed, noting that these study programs are important to maintain stronger links between our countries. Prince Sultan remarked that in the past there had been a problem with student visas and that he was glad to hear that these problems were over (he repeated this exact comment several moments later). He then noted that he hoped for growth in the economic field, and that the U.S. would be increasingly open to international companies.

Iran - Pursuing Wrong Policies

3.(C) Gen. Jones described the administration's concerns about Iran's failure to negotiate with the international community about its nuclear program. President Obama had set the end of 2009 as a deadline for Iran to choose negotiations over confrontation. That deadline had passed and the President now believed it was time to start considering sanctions. Prince Sultan responded that Iran has been pursuing "wrong policies." Inside Iran, he said, there are

enlightened people, and what we see in the (Iranian) media is discussion of their ideas. This "should bring results." Gen. Jones' observed that President Obama was leaving the door open to Iran while hoping that reason will prevail. Prince Sultan said that the U.S. is a superpower, and that it will "include all people." Referring to the President, he said "I listen to his speeches. I think he is balanced, and like King Abdullah, he is a man of action."

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

4.(C) General Jones described President Obama's disappointment at the lack of greater progress on the Arab-Israeli peace process during 2009. He assured Prince Sultan that this remained a top priority of the administration, and that the commitment to a two state solution remained firm. Prince Sultan replied that it was good that the U.S. had a policy of moderation and patience and observed more broadly that "each should serve the interest of the world to the extent possible." He added that it is "good that Saudi Arabia has an independent policy."

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN

5.(C) General Jones described the administration's current strategy in Afghanistan with its emphasis on national reunification, reducing the reliance on military operations and encouraging reconciliation. He stressed that a key part of this strategy was that Pakistan must ensure that its territory would no longer be used as a safehaven, and that

the U.S. looked to Saudi Arabia to support this effort. Prince Sultan responded with the general observation that "everything related to terrorism is bad and therefore terrorists and their ideology should be fought."

COMMENT/BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

16. (S/NF) While Prince Sultan did not engage in a detailed discussion with General Jones, it is nonetheless encouraging that he showed an instinctive support for the U.S.-Saudi relationship and for President Obama. It seems clear that he has returned from his convalescence much less conversant on issues of importance to Saudi national security. The meeting participants also noted that, prior to the start of the meeting, the Prince's handlers were highly concerned about stage managing Gen. Jones' entry into the meeting room, where television cameras were rolling to record the handshakes (in particular the Crown Prince's Chief of Protocol repeatedly checked to ensure that each member of the delegation was in the proper place in line before being escorted into the meeting room.) The Crown Prince's long illness seems to have left him with diminished mental acuity that could affect his ability to function effectively as King. Despite this, the image being presented to the Saudi public is of a man recovered and back on the job.

SMITH